

Laborare est orare. By the Puritan moralist the ancient maxim is repeated with a new and intenser significance. The labour which he idealizes is not simply a requirement imposed by nature, or a punishment for the sin of Adam. It is itself a kind of ascetic discipline, more rigorous than that demanded of any order of mendicants—a discipline imposed by the will of God, and to be undergone, not in solitude, but in the punctual discharge of secular duties. It is not merely an economic means, to be laid aside when physical needs have been satisfied. It is a spiritual end, for in it alone can the soul find health, and it must be continued as an ethical duty long after it has ceased to be a material necessity. Work thus conceived stands at the very opposite pole from "good works" as they were understood, or misunderstood, by Protestants. They, it was thought, had been a series of single transactions, performed as compensation for particular sins, or out of anxiety to acquire merit. What is required of the Puritan is not individual meritorious acts, but a holy life—a system in which every element is grouped round a central idea, the service of God, from which all disturbing irrelevances have been pruned, and to which all minor interests are subordinated.

His conception of that life was expressed in the words,

¹¹ Be wholly taken up in diligent business of your law-

ful callings, when you are not exercised in
 the more
 immediate service of God." ⁷⁹ In order to
 deepen
 his spiritual life, the Christian must be
 prepared to
 narrow it. He " is blind in no man's cause,
 but best
 sighted in his own. He confines himself
 to the
 cirde of his own affairs and thrusts not his
 fingers in
 needless fires. . . . He sees the falseness of
 it [the
 world] and therefore learns to trust
 himself ever,
 others so far as not to be damaged by their
 disappoint-
 ment." ⁸⁰ There must be no idle leisure; "
 those
 that are prodigal of their time despise
 their own
 souls." ⁸¹ Religion must be active, not
 merely con-